



TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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TOWN PLANNER'S OFFICE

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**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2012, 7:00 PM**

PRESENT: Vice Chairman Chris Todd, Regular Members David Hurley and Stanislav Moline and Alternate Stefanie Cunningham

ABSENT: Chair Sean Kelly and Alternates Gilbert Gamboa and Joseph Dorreman

STAFF: Lisa M. Houlihan, Assistant Town Planner and Acting Recording Secretary

I. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS (on non-agenda items): None

III. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Report: Business Directory – Online demonstration from GoLocal QA, a web based company with mobile application capabilities to promote local businesses via unlimited interactive micro-websites.

Representatives from GovQA were present. They are privately owned and represents 100,000 businesses nationally and over 130 municipalities ranging in size from 5,000 citizens plus. Studies prove that 63% of small businesses do not have their own websites and 85% of all purchases are conducted within 5 mile radius of home. GoLocal can provide the EDC with the ability to offer local businesses their own micro-sites (websites) through a link on the EDC page for public access via the internet or mobile technology; this is an alternative to providing a paperback business directory.

They conducted an online demonstration. GoLocal trains businesses on how to create and manage their own micro-sites. Training is offered via the web, phone support and through a variety of tutorials available for self access during off hours. There is no limit to the number of micro-sites that can be provided. There is also a "report abuse" tag that can be used to alert town staff of any issues and a disclaimer can be added to the main page, if desired.

A "follow me" function allows users to sign-up to follow their favorites, alerts are sent via text or email. A list of vacant commercial/business space link is also provided and is a mechanism for the EDC to work with landlords to list and fill vacancies. Different aspects can be listed about available space, like permitted uses, floors plans, sample leases, etc. The "follow me" function can be used here too.

GoLocal servers run and store all information. They can import information from existing databases. Marketing support is included in implementation costs and includes press release creation, delivery of a 20/30 second robo voice recording to alert businesses of the new service, email mailings to local businesses about the new service, and additional marketing may include an announcement on public access television and mailing stuffers. Implementation and monthly service fees were discussed. The typical turnaround is 3 to 4 weeks and is coordinated with town staff. Implementation fees are billed at onset of the project, but can be spread out over two/three payments.

GoLocal also provides municipalities with other web and mobile applications like a "Community Events" page and a "Construction Projects" page where active projects can be listed and residents can be alerted about road closures and alternate routes. There is also a Park & Recreation page where game schedules can be listed and real-time alerts sent regarding cancelations. The focus of this presentation was to explore an alternative form of business directory, however it was noted that fees do not increase if the additional services are included.

The EDC thanked GoLocal representatives for the presentation and their time. They will discuss this service with the remainder of the EDC and the town. At this time, representatives from GoLocal disconnected from the meeting.

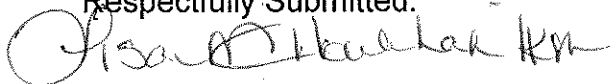
The commission noted that GoLocal services are intriguing, noting the benefit of businesses to be accessible via internet and mobile application. Rough quotes from a local print shop set initial costs around \$4,000, of which does not include postage costs. Going electronic is more efficient than providing a paperback business directory.

The Commission asked Ms. Houlihan to seek a list of references from GoLocal and to ask them the following: Can an attractive pdf of the micro-sites be printed out for displaying in public places like the Town Hall, Library, EDC office? Can a streamer/banner be added to the main GoLocal page that would showcase businesses with the most comprehensive and up-to-date pages? Is there a way to track non-responsive sites? Is there is a way to track the number of hits to the main page?

IV. ADJOURNMENT:

**MOVED (TODD), SECONDED (HURLEY) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO
ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:55 P.M.**

Respectfully Submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa M. Houlihan", with a stylized "KM" monogram at the end.

Lisa M. Houlihan
Acting Recording Secretary